

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

3HR
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, January 15, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "KITCHEN REFORM." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Something about these long chilly January days makes my thoughts turn to the kitchen. Something about the weather perhaps always makes me reflect on this women's work center at this time of year. And the more I reflect, the more grateful I am that the wave of reform rolled kitchenward and is still rolling. We women who spend so many hours in the kitchen owe thanks to the reformers who first began advocating convenient kitchens, and made house-builders conscious of the advantages of a well-planned and equipped cooking room. But a lot of work on kitchens is yet to do. Your kitchen and mine still need little reforms or big ones to make the work go smoothly. The man of the house may not understand it yet, but we women know that the peace of the entire household may depend on a good kitchen. And we also know that a few reforms in arrangement or equipment may save fuss and flurry, tired backs, poor meals, and cross words.

So if you are in the mood to do a little reforming on your own these January days, don't forget that you can get help from many places. Your State college will send you information. Your county home demonstration agent will help you. And you can write to Washington to the Department of Agriculture where the home economists have been studying kitchen problems. If you aren't contented with the way work goes in your kitchen, you can get plenty of help in making well-planned changes.

From what I hear from my home economics friends who are working on kitchen problems, the way to arrange your equipment for efficiency is to have a "step-saving sequence." They explain that the jobs you do in your kitchen follow a definite order. For example, you collect the food first, then prepare, then cook, then serve it. When you clean up after the meal, you remove the soiled dishes, then scrape and stack them, then wash, drain, and put them away. This natural sequence of kitchen work is the guide to the way you place your equipment. When you are preparing food, you'll use first the food storage cupboard and refrigerator, then a work surface like a table and also probably a sink, then the stove and last the serving table. In the clearing away process, you'll use first the stack table, then the sink, then the drain-board, and last the shelves for china.

See what the kitchen sequence idea is? Instead of walking all over the kitchen and pantry, the equipment is set up so you just move along from one job to another in natural order.

And to make the work most comfortable, you need to spend a little thought on whether it goes from left to right, or right to left. The home economists suggest that in the preparation of food, work can proceed comfortably either toward the right or left, but it should always go toward the dining room door or

1-15-36

serving window. But they say that in clearing up the kitchen, work proceeds most efficiently to the left. You see, as you wash each dish or utensil, you hold it in your left hand. And if the drain-board is on the right of the sink, the left hand must cross over the right with every piece you put down.

But of course, the arrangement of equipment in any kitchen is limited by the size and the proportions of the room and also by the doors and windows and the provisions for water and gas. Of course, if you are building a new home, you can tell the architect and builder how you want your equipment placed so that he can plan doors, fix pipes and so on accordingly.

But in a kitchen already built, your equipment will have to adapt itself somewhat to the room.

Here are some of the recommendations of the home economists for locating equipment. Among them you may find just the change your kitchen needs. First, about the sink. A sink has a drainboard to the left and a flat surface or drainboard to the right and both of these are level with the top edge of the sink. If you have a double sink, that needs a flat surface on either side. The drainboard or surface at the left of the sink should be at least 32 inches long and the stacking surface at the right at least 36 inches.

Under the sink leave an open space to allow knee room for yourself when you are sitting down to peel potatoes and so on. Then, within easy reach of the sink, have some narrow shelves to hold cleaning materials, and a wider shelf or cabinet nearby for the storage of any materials or utensils used there first. Hang up near the sink small utensils such as a dish scraper, paring knife, can opener, and so on.

You'll also find that a cabinet with outside ventilation for vegetable storage, or a draft cupboard is convenient near the sink.-- a ventilated cabinet because most vegetables deteriorate rapidly at room temperature unless they have proper ventilation.

The home economists think that a window in the wall at right angles to the sink makes the good daytime lighting for a sink, because it throws light directly on your work. Artificial light also should shine on the sink rather than in the eyes and cast no shadows on your work.

If you store dishes in your kitchen, the storage should be above the left drainboard or within reach of it. If you can store dishes in a cupboard easy to reach from both dining room and kitchen this saves steps. When you can't arrange dish storage in reach of the sink, a wheel table is a great help.

Now about the stove. Set it at right angles to the sink, or directly across from the sink, if the kitchen is narrow. Shelves or a cabinet for storage of utensils used at the sink should be within reach of the cooking surface.

Locate the serving center of your kitchen between the stove and the place where you serve food most frequently. The serving center may be close to either stove or the sink. Here is where you will keep any foods not requiring refrigeration and used without additional preparation such as bread and cake, and where you'll keep serving dishes, silver, and trays.

Too bad. Time's up and I'm only just started on reforms. Some other day we'll continue. But in the meantime, don't forget that you can get plenty of good help free for the asking when you want to fix up your kitchen.

